



National Disabled Veterans

# Winter Sports Clinic

## Skier Profile

Daniel Gilyeat – New Home, New Life,  
New Outlook



Last year, Daniel Gilyeat's life had hit a low point. In mid-2005, he had returned from his second tour in Iraq missing his left leg, after the humvee he was riding in hit an anti tank mine. A year later, Marine Staff Sergeant Gilyeat was facing a divorce, a crumbling home, and the care of his four children, all under the age of 8. "My first tour was in 2003 and 2004," Gilyeat explained. "I was asked if I would go back a second time. I said that I would for two reasons. One was to try to save my marriage. The other was to make a difference with my Marines."

After surgery and physical rehabilitation, Gilyeat, who is now 36, returned to his small, two-bedroom, 980-square foot home in Kansas City, Kansas. "It was crumbling down around us, and the kids had to do a lot to help out," he said. "Then, someone recommended me to an organization called, "Homes for Heroes." They help raise money for new homes for wounded soldiers. Around the same time, they were contacted by ABC's *Extreme Makeover Home Edition*. Homes for Heroes told them about me. In four days, with the help of a whole lot of people and very special volunteers, they had built us a brand new home."

Gilyeat's story aired on the prime time show on February 10, 2008. The new home is not only three times larger than the old one, with four bedrooms and four baths, it also came with a car-themed room for the boys, a rain forest room for the oldest girl, an Asian-themed bedroom for Gilyeat (to induce relaxation), total wheelchair accessibility and numerous other special features. "Now, my kids can be kids again," Gilyeat said.

The makeover has also inspired Gilyeat to volunteer himself for *Homes for Heroes*. He decided to explore other new activities as well, and signed up to participate in the 2008 National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, an event he heard about from his treatment team at the VA medical center in Kansas City, Mo. "They really encouraged me to try skiing," Gilyeat said. "So I tried it in January for the first time as an amputee. I hadn't skied since I was 18, and this time I tried it once wearing a prosthetic, then skied with just a single leg and outriggers. Before the end of the day, I was on the black diamond slopes. It was absolutely awesome – I loved it. Participating in the Winter Sports Clinic shows us that nothing is impossible."

Prior to his injury, Gilyeat was active in the martial arts, weightlifting, archery and drag racing. He sees no reason not to stop now. "In many ways, this (injury) has been a blessing," he says. "I am no longer afraid to talk to people and I have learned that there is something positive that can come out of everything. I would tell other veterans with injuries like mine to get out there and start living life to the fullest. This was a wake-up call – it told me that even though we're not bulletproof, there are so many things we can still do."

After his injury on the battlefields of Iraq, Danny Gilyeat received the Silver Star. And, although he did lose part of his body there, his winning spirit clearly remains in tact.

*Miracles on a Mountainside!*



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Disabled American Veterans